The realization of economic and social rights in rural areas through the functioning of Rural Local Self-Governance (RLSG), using the Respect–Protect–Fulfil–Promote (RPFP) framework as an analytical tool. The framework provides a structured approach to assess not only the existence of rights in normative and policy terms but also their actual realization in practice. Drawing upon empirical data collected across selected Panchayats, this chapter examines the performance of ten key welfare schemes namely the Public Distribution System (PDS), Old Age/Widow Pension Scheme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS – Education and Health components), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), and Swachh Bharat Gramin Mission (SBGM). Together, these schemes represent critical instruments for the realization of economic and social rights, including the right to food, livelihood, housing, education, health, water, and sanitation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is

especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

At the outset, the analysis reveals that the Respect dimension, which captures awareness and recognition of rights, is consistently strong across almost all schemes. The data indicates that rights-related indicators generally record high mean scores, often ranging between 4.50 and 5.00, reflecting a widespread understanding among beneficiaries regarding their entitlements. Schemes such as SSA, PDS, and NRHM demonstrate particularly high levels of awareness, with several Panchayats recording near-maximum scores. Similarly, ICDS (both education and health components) and PMAY also show strong recognition of rights, suggesting that these schemes are well institutionalized and visible at the grassroots level. However, certain schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission exhibit relatively greater variation in specific indicators, with some scores falling below 3.50 and even approaching 1.60 in isolated cases. This indicates that while general awareness exists, the depth and comprehensiveness of understanding remain uneven. Nevertheless, the overall pattern suggests that the State has been largely successful in fulfilling its obligation to respect rights by establishing a strong normative and informational foundation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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In contrast, the Protect dimension, which relates to procedural efficiency and the removal of barriers in accessing entitlements, emerges as the most critical area of concern. Across schemes, process-related indicators show significant variation and, in many cases, relatively low mean scores. For instance, schemes such as PDS, SBGM, and JJM consistently record low procedural values, often ranging between 1.27 and 2.50, indicating serious challenges such as administrative delays, bureaucratic complexity, lack of transparency, and weak grievance redressal mechanisms. Even in schemes with relatively better performance, such as NRHM and PMAY, procedural scores vary widely across Panchayats, reflecting uneven administrative capacity. MGNREGA, in particular, demonstrates stark inter-Panchayat disparities, with some areas reporting high procedural efficiency while others show very low scores. These findings highlight a fundamental disconnect between the recognition of rights and their accessibility in practice. The persistence of procedural bottlenecks suggests that the State’s obligation to protect rights by ensuring efficient and barrier-free access remains inadequately fulfilled.

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indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The Fulfil dimension, which focuses on the provision of infrastructure and services necessary for the realization of rights, presents a mixed but moderately positive picture. Facility-related indicators across schemes generally record mean scores in the range of 3.00 to 4.80, indicating that basic infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms are largely in place. Schemes such as SSA, NRHM, and the health component of ICDS exhibit relatively high and consistent facility scores, often exceeding 4.50, reflecting stronger institutional frameworks and better monitoring systems. However, other schemes such as JJM, SBGM, and ICDS (education component) display considerable variation, with some Panchayats recording significantly lower scores (as low as 2.07–2.87). Similarly, PDS and MGNREGA show moderate facility scores with noticeable disparities across locations. These findings suggest that while the State has made substantial progress in creating infrastructure, issues related to quality, maintenance, coverage, and sustainability continue to affect

the uniform realization of rights. Thus, the obligation to fulfil rights is partially achieved, with clear scope for improvement in ensuring equitable and reliable service delivery.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The Promote dimension, which encompasses awareness-building, participation, and community engagement, reflects moderate levels of realization across schemes. Perception-related indicators generally fall within the range of 3.00 to 4.50, indicating that beneficiaries recognize the presence of welfare schemes but exhibit varying levels of satisfaction and engagement. Schemes such as SSA and NRHM tend to perform better in this dimension, with relatively higher perception scores, suggesting greater acceptance and effectiveness. In contrast, schemes like SBGM and JJM show lower perception values in certain

Panchayats, indicating dissatisfaction and limited behavioral change. ICDS, PMAY, and MGNREGA also display moderate variation, highlighting the influence of service quality and procedural efficiency on beneficiary perceptions. These findings suggest that while efforts have been made to promote awareness and participation, community engagement remains uneven and insufficiently institutionalized, thereby limiting the transformative potential of these schemes.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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A cross-scheme perspective further reveals that the realization of economic and social rights is not uniform but varies significantly across sectors and Panchayats. Education and health-related schemes, such as SSA and NRHM, demonstrate relatively better performance across all RPFP dimensions, likely due to stronger institutional support,

standardized implementation mechanisms, and sustained policy focus. In contrast, schemes related to basic services and entitlements, such as PDS, JJM, and SBGM, show greater variability and weaker performance in procedural and infrastructural aspects, indicating higher dependence on local administrative capacity. Employment and housing schemes occupy an intermediate position, with strong awareness but uneven implementation outcomes.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Overall, the findings of this chapter underscore a critical insight: while the normative framework of economic and social rights is well established, their effective realization is significantly shaped by Panchayat-level governance dynamics. The consistent variation in scores across Panchayats within the same scheme highlights the

decisive role of local administrative capacity, accountability mechanisms, and resource management. The RPFP analysis clearly demonstrates that the gap between policy intent and ground-level outcomes is most pronounced in the Protect and Fulfil dimensions, where procedural inefficiencies and infrastructural disparities act as major constraints.

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In conclusion, this chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of how economic and social rights are experienced at the grassroots level. It highlights that the realization of rights is not merely a function of legal recognition or policy design but is deeply contingent upon the effectiveness of decentralized governance structures. The subsequent sections build upon this analysis to identify specific challenges and

propose targeted measures to strengthen the role of RLSG in ensuring the equitable and effective realization of economic and social rights.

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Implementation Status of Welfare Schemes through Rural Local Self-Governance

Food Security and the Public Distribution System under the RPFP Framework

The right to food security is a fundamental component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and is further operationalized through statutory frameworks such as the National Food Security Act. The Public Distribution System (PDS) serves as a key mechanism for ensuring access to subsidized food grains for vulnerable populations.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognition of food security as a basic entitlement and non-interference in accessing benefits under the scheme. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSA1–RSA3) show consistently very high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 4.73 to 5.00. Several Panchayats (1, 4, and 6) report the maximum score of 5.00, while even the lowest observed value of 4.73 (Panchayat 7) remains significantly high. This reflects a strong level of awareness and formal recognition of entitlements under PDS, indicating that the scheme is deeply institutionalized at the normative level. The minimal variation across Panchayats suggests that awareness is both widespread and relatively uniform. Thus, the Respect dimension is substantially realized.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Protect

The obligation to protect requires ensuring that beneficiaries are not hindered by procedural inefficiencies or administrative barriers in accessing food grains. The process-related indicators (PSA1–PSA3) show considerable variation with generally low to moderate mean scores, ranging from 1.27 to 4.73. Notably, PSA1 records consistently low values across Panchayats, such as 1.27 (Panchayat 7), 1.33 (Panchayat 5), and 1.40 (Panchayat 1), indicating serious procedural challenges in accessing benefits. Although some indicators like PSA3 show relatively higher values (e.g., 4.73 in Panchayat 4), the overall pattern reflects inefficiencies such as delays, administrative hurdles, and irregularities in distribution. This suggests that despite strong

rights awareness, beneficiaries continue to face significant barriers in accessing their entitlements. Therefore, the Protect dimension is weak to moderately realized.

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Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure adequate infrastructure, supply mechanisms, and service delivery for effective implementation. The facility-related indicators (FSA1–FSA4) demonstrate moderate to high mean scores ranging from 2.47 to 4.80, with visible inter-Panchayat variation. Panchayat 4 records the highest score of 4.80 (FSA4), indicating relatively better infrastructure and service delivery, whereas lower values such as 2.47 (Panchayat 7, FSA3) and 2.53 (Panchayat 7, FSA1) highlight deficiencies in certain

areas. Most Panchayats report values between 3.80 and 4.53, suggesting that while the basic infrastructure of PDS is in place, its quality, consistency, and efficiency vary across Panchayats. Thus, the Fulfil dimension is partially to substantially realized, but uneven in implementation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, transparency, and beneficiary engagement in the functioning of the scheme. The perceived realization indicators (PRSA1–PRSA2) show moderate to high mean scores ranging from 3.67 to 4.33. Higher values such as 4.33 (Panchayats 1, 3, and 4) indicate relatively better satisfaction levels, whereas lower scores such as 3.67 (Panchayat 6)

and 3.80 (Panchayat 6, PRSA2) reflect comparatively weaker perceptions. This variation suggests that while beneficiaries acknowledge the presence of the PDS, their level of satisfaction is influenced by procedural efficiency and service quality. The moderate nature of these scores indicates that awareness and engagement efforts are present but not sufficiently robust or uniform. Therefore, the Promote dimension is moderately realized.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The Public Distribution System under the RPFP framework reveals that while the scheme has achieved strong institutional recognition and widespread awareness, its effective realization is constrained by procedural inefficiencies and uneven infrastructural support. The Respect dimension is substantially realized, whereas the Protect

dimension remains weak due to administrative barriers. The Fulfil dimension is moderately achieved with inter-Panchayat disparities, and the Promote dimension remains moderate, reflecting variations in beneficiary perception and engagement. These findings underscore that the realization of the right to food security is significantly influenced by Panchayat-level governance, highlighting the critical role of local administrative capacity in translating statutory entitlements into effective service delivery.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Social Security and Pension Entitlements under the RPFP Framework

The right to social security constitutes a vital component of economic rights, particularly for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and

widows, and is reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy under Articles 41 and 42 of the Constitution of India. The Old Age/Widow Pension Scheme is a key welfare mechanism that promotes income security and dignity.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires the State to recognize beneficiaries' entitlements and ensure non-interference in accessing benefits. The findings indicate that receipt-related indicators (RSB1–RSB3) register consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging between 4.20 and 5.00. Panchayats 3 and 5 record the highest score of 5.00, while even the lowest observed value of 4.20 in Panchayat 1 remains substantially high. This suggests that beneficiaries are largely able to access pension benefits and that the scheme is well recognized at the

grassroots level. However, the relatively lower score of 2.60 in Panchayat 3 (RSB2) indicates certain inconsistencies in specific aspects of benefit receipt, possibly linked to irregular disbursement or administrative delays. Thus, while the Respect dimension appears substantially fulfilled in terms of formal recognition and access, minor inconsistencies highlight that entitlement realization is not uniformly stable across all Panchayats.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Protect

The obligation to protect entails safeguarding beneficiaries from procedural barriers and administrative inefficiencies that may hinder access to entitlements. The process-related indicators (PSB1–PSB3) reflect moderate performance, with mean scores ranging from 1.53 to

3.93 across Panchayats. Lower values, such as 1.53 in Panchayat 1 (PSB1), indicate significant procedural challenges in application, approval, and documentation processes, while relatively higher scores such as 3.93 in Panchayat 3 and 3.87 in Panchayat 4 (PSB3) suggest partial efficiency in certain procedural aspects. This variation indicates that although the scheme is operational, procedural mechanisms are neither uniform nor fully efficient, thereby exposing beneficiaries particularly vulnerable groups to indirect barriers. Consequently, the Protect dimension remains only partially realized, as administrative processes continue to limit seamless access to social security benefits.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure effective delivery

systems, including facilitation, accessibility, and institutional support. The facilitation-related indicators (FSB1–FSB4) reveal consistently low mean scores across Panchayats, generally ranging from 1.07 to 2.47. Extremely low values, such as 1.07 in Panchayat 3 (FSB1–FSB3), indicate a near absence of facilitative support mechanisms, including administrative assistance, awareness generation, and grievance redressal. Even the relatively higher score of 2.47 in Panchayat 7 remains inadequate in absolute terms. Although FSB4 shows higher values (ranging from 4.33 to 4.93), suggesting that the final disbursement of pensions is functioning relatively well, the supporting institutional framework necessary to ensure accessibility and ease of access remains weak. Therefore, the Fulfil dimension is significantly deficient, as the State's obligation to create enabling conditions for beneficiaries is not adequately met.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and beneficiary engagement with the scheme. The perception-related indicators (PRSB1–PRSB2) demonstrate moderate to high mean scores ranging from 2.60 to 4.93 across Panchayats. Higher scores, such as 4.93 in Panchayat 3 and 4.87 in Panchayat 4 (PRSB1), reflect a generally positive perception of the scheme, largely due to the direct financial benefits received. However, lower scores, such as 2.60 in Panchayat 7, indicate dissatisfaction in certain areas, likely arising from procedural inefficiencies and lack of facilitation support. This variation suggests that while beneficiaries acknowledge the importance of the scheme, their engagement remains largely passive, with limited awareness and participation in governance processes. Thus, the Promote dimension is moderately realized but lacks depth in terms of participatory empowerment and sustained awareness generation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The Old Age/Widow Pension Scheme performs effectively in terms of benefit delivery, its realization is constrained by procedural inefficiencies and weak facilitation mechanisms. The imbalance between strong receipt of benefits and weak institutional support underscores the need for strengthening administrative processes and enhancing grassroots-level governance to ensure comprehensive realization of the right to social security.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Right to Work and MGNREGA under the RPFP Framework

The right to work is a fundamental economic right recognized under Article 41 of the Constitution of India and operationalized through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which guarantees wage employment to rural households. The scheme represents a rights-based approach to livelihood security and rural development. The realization of this right is assessed through the Respect–Protect–Fulfil–Promote (RPFP) framework, based on Panchayat-wise mean scores.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognition of the legal entitlement to employment and non-interference in accessing such rights. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSC1–RSC3) record consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, generally ranging from 4.20 to 5.00. Panchayat 1, 2, 3, and 4 report the highest score of 5.00 (RSC1), while even the lowest observed value of 4.20 (Panchayat 6, RSC2 and RSC3) remains substantially high. This reflects a strong level of awareness and recognition of employment entitlements under MGNREGA among beneficiaries. However, minor variations across Panchayats suggest that while the scheme is well institutionalised at the normative level, the depth of awareness and effective empowerment may not be entirely uniform. Thus, the Respect dimension is largely fulfilled, indicating that the right to work is well established in principle.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it

shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires the State to ensure that beneficiaries are not hindered by procedural inefficiencies or administrative barriers in accessing employment. The process-related indicators (PSC1–PSC3) reveal significant variation across Panchayats, with mean scores ranging from 1.20 to 4.93. While certain Panchayats, such as Panchayat 5 (4.93 in PSC1) and Panchayat 1 (4.73 in PSC1), demonstrate relatively strong procedural functioning, others report considerably lower scores, particularly 1.20 in Panchayat 2 and Panchayat 6 (PSC3) and 1.40 in Panchayat 2 (PSC2). This disparity highlights inconsistencies in key procedural aspects such as job card issuance, work allocation, and timely provision of employment. The presence of such low scores indicates that administrative inefficiencies continue to act as barriers, thereby undermining beneficiaries' ability to fully exercise their right to work. Consequently, the Protect dimension is only partially realized, as procedural safeguards remain uneven and unreliable across Panchayats.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and

accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure adequate infrastructure, facilities, and support systems necessary for effective implementation. The facility-related indicators (FSC1–FSC4) show moderate but uneven mean scores ranging from 1.20 to 4.60. For instance, Panchayat 4 records a relatively high score of 4.60 (FSC1), indicating better availability of worksite facilities, while Panchayat 1 shows extremely low scores of 1.20 (FSC2–FSC4), reflecting a lack of essential amenities. Similarly, other Panchayats exhibit low values such as 1.33–1.67, indicating inadequate provision of facilities like drinking water, rest areas, and childcare at worksites. These disparities suggest that while employment opportunities may be generated, the quality and conditions of work remain inconsistent and often inadequate. Therefore, the Fulfil dimension is only partially achieved, as the State's responsibility to ensure dignified and supportive working conditions is not uniformly met across Panchayats.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and community engagement in the implementation of the scheme. The perception-related indicators (PRSC1–PRSC2) show moderate variation across Panchayats, ranging from 2.73 to 4.33. Higher scores, such as 4.33 in Panchayat 3 (PRSC1) and 4.13 in Panchayat 1 (PRSC2), indicate relatively better satisfaction and perceived effectiveness, whereas lower scores such as 2.73 in Panchayat 7 and 2.87 in Panchayat 2 reflect dissatisfaction among beneficiaries. This variation suggests that although beneficiaries recognize the scheme, their engagement remains uneven, and participation in decision-making processes is limited. The relatively moderate scores indicate that promotional efforts, including awareness campaigns and participatory governance mechanisms, are insufficiently developed. Thus, the Promote dimension is moderately realized but lacks the depth required for empowering beneficiaries and ensuring sustained engagement.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the

evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The MGNREGA under the RPFP framework reveals a significant gap between strong rights recognition and uneven implementation. While the Respect dimension is robust, reflecting widespread awareness of employment entitlements, the Protect and Fulfil dimensions are constrained by procedural inefficiencies and inadequate infrastructural support. The Promote dimension remains moderate, indicating limited beneficiary participation and awareness beyond basic recognition. These findings highlight that although MGNREGA is a rights-based scheme in design, its effective realization is heavily dependent on Panchayat-level governance, with substantial variations influencing the accessibility, quality, and outcomes of employment generation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics

with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Housing Rights and PMAY under the RPFP Framework

The right to adequate housing is an integral component of economic rights and is derived from the broader interpretation of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) seeks to ensure housing for all, particularly for economically weaker sections in rural areas. The realization of this right is examined through the Respect–Protect–Fulfil–Promote (RPFP) framework, based on Panchayat-wise mean scores.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between

policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognition of housing entitlements and non-interference in beneficiaries' access to such rights. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSD1–RSD3) show consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, generally ranging from 3.60 to 5.00. Panchayats 2, 4, and 6 report the highest score of 5.00 (RSD1), while even the lowest observed value of 3.60 (Panchayat 3, RSD3) remains relatively strong. Most Panchayats record values above 4.00, reflecting a high level of awareness regarding eligibility criteria and housing entitlements under PMAY. However, comparatively lower scores in indicators such as RSD3 across several Panchayats suggest that while awareness exists, comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the scheme may not be uniform. Thus, the Respect dimension is substantially realized, indicating that the right to housing is well recognized at the normative level.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires ensuring that beneficiaries are not hindered by administrative or procedural barriers in accessing housing benefits. The process-related indicators (PSD1–PSD3) display noticeable variation across Panchayats, with mean scores ranging from 2.27 to 4.93. While Panchayat 4 records a high score of 4.93 (PSD1) and Panchayat 3 shows 4.80 (PSD1), lower values such as 2.27 (Panchayat 7, PSD3) and 2.93 (Panchayat 6, PSD3) indicate procedural inefficiencies in certain areas. This variation reflects inconsistencies in application processing, beneficiary selection, fund disbursement, and construction timelines. The presence of both high and low scores suggests that while procedural mechanisms are functional in some Panchayats, they remain weak and unreliable in others. Consequently, the Protect dimension is only partially realized, as administrative inefficiencies continue to act as barriers to equitable access to housing benefits.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the

evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure adequate infrastructure, quality housing, and necessary support services. The facility-related indicators (FSD1–FSD4) show moderate but uneven mean scores ranging from 1.67 to 4.60. Panchayat 4 records relatively higher values such as 4.60 (FSD2) and 4.33 (FSD1 and FSD3), indicating better housing quality and support, whereas consistently low scores in FSD4 across Panchayats, such as 1.67 (Panchayat 3) and 1.87 (Panchayats 1 and 2), highlight deficiencies in essential amenities or completion-related aspects. Similarly, Panchayats 6 and 7 report lower facility scores, reflecting gaps in technical support and infrastructure provision. This disparity indicates that while housing units may be constructed, the quality, completeness, and supporting amenities are not uniformly ensured. Therefore, the Fulfil dimension is only partially achieved, as the State’s obligation to provide adequate and dignified housing conditions remains uneven across Panchayats.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical

evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and beneficiary engagement in the implementation of the scheme. The perception-related indicators (PRSD1–PRSD2) demonstrate moderate variation across Panchayats, with mean scores ranging from 2.47 to 4.13. Higher values, such as 4.13 (Panchayat 1, PRSD2) and 3.93 (Panchayat 3, PRSD2), indicate relatively better satisfaction levels, whereas lower scores such as 2.47 (Panchayat 2, PRSD1) and 2.67 (Panchayat 2, PRSD2) reflect dissatisfaction among beneficiaries. This variation suggests that although beneficiaries recognize the scheme, their perception of its effectiveness is influenced by procedural delays and inconsistencies in service delivery. The moderate nature of these scores indicates limited community participation and insufficient awareness-building efforts. Thus, the Promote dimension is moderately

realized but lacks depth in fostering active beneficiary engagement and participatory governance.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The analysis of PMAY under the RPFP framework reveals that while the scheme has achieved substantial success in terms of awareness and recognition of housing rights, its effective realization is constrained by procedural inefficiencies and uneven infrastructural outcomes. The Respect dimension is strong, reflecting widespread awareness, whereas the Protect and Fulfil dimensions are only partially realized due to administrative and implementation gaps. The Promote dimension remains moderate, indicating limited beneficiary participation and variable satisfaction levels. These findings underscore that the realization of the right to housing is significantly

influenced by Panchayat-level governance, with local variations playing a decisive role in determining the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of housing benefits.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Elementary Education and SSA under the RPFP Framework

The right to education is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21A of the Constitution of India, ensuring free and compulsory elementary education for all children. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) serves as a key policy instrument for the realization of this right, focusing on universal access, retention, and quality of education. The realization of this right is assessed through the Respect–Protect–Fulfil–Promote (RPFP) framework, based on Panchayat-wise mean scores.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognition of educational entitlements and non-interference in access to schooling. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSE1–RSE3) record consistently very high mean scores across all Panchayats, ranging from 4.87 to 5.00. Most Panchayats, including Panchayats 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6, report the maximum score of 5.00, while the lowest observed value of 4.87 in Panchayat 7 remains significantly high. This reflects a strong level of awareness and recognition of the right to elementary education among respondents, indicating that SSA is firmly institutionalized at the normative level. The uniformity of these high scores suggests that educational entitlements are widely known and accepted across

Panchayats, thereby demonstrating that the Respect dimension is fully realized in both formal and practical terms.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires the State to ensure that access to education is not hindered by administrative inefficiencies or systemic barriers. The process-related indicators (PSE1–PSE3) show generally high mean scores ranging from 2.53 to 5.00, though with some inter-Panchayat variation. While Panchayats 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 report the highest score of 5.00 (PSE1), lower values such as 2.53 (Panchayat 7, PSE2) and 3.07 (Panchayat 6, PSE2) indicate certain procedural gaps in administrative coordination and service delivery. Despite these variations, most scores remain above 3.50, suggesting that procedural

mechanisms are largely functional. This indicates that the Protect dimension is substantially realized, although minor inefficiencies at the local level continue to affect uniformity in implementation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure adequate infrastructure, facilities, and quality educational services. The facility-related indicators (FSE1–FSE4) demonstrate consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 4.13 to 5.00. Panchayats 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 report multiple instances of maximum scores (5.00) across facility indicators, reflecting strong availability of school infrastructure, teaching resources, and support services. Even the lowest observed value of 4.13 (Panchayat 2, FSE4) indicates a relatively high standard

of provision. The minimal variation across Panchayats suggests that SSA benefits from standardized implementation and effective monitoring mechanisms, ensuring relatively uniform access to educational facilities. Therefore, the Fulfil dimension is effectively realized, with strong infrastructural support across the study area.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and community engagement in the educational process. The perception-related indicators (PRSE1–PRSE2) show high mean scores ranging from 3.73 to 4.67, indicating generally positive perceptions among respondents. Higher values such as 4.67 (Panchayat 3, PRSE1) and 4.47 (Panchayat 1 and 6, PRSE2) reflect strong satisfaction with

the scheme's outcomes, while comparatively lower scores such as 3.73 (Panchayat 5, PRSE1) suggest some variation in perception. These findings indicate that beneficiaries largely perceive SSA as effective in delivering educational outcomes, although engagement and satisfaction are not entirely uniform. Thus, the Promote dimension is substantially realized, with relatively strong but not entirely consistent levels of community engagement and awareness.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Overall, the analysis of SSA under the RPFP framework reveals a high level of realization of the right to education across all dimensions. The Respect dimension is fully achieved, reflecting universal awareness of educational entitlements, while the Protect and Promote dimensions are substantially realized with minor variations. The Fulfil dimension

stands out as particularly strong, indicating robust infrastructural support and standardized implementation. Compared to other welfare schemes, SSA demonstrates lower inter-Panchayat variation, suggesting that education-related interventions benefit from stronger institutional mechanisms and centralized oversight. These findings highlight that the effective realization of the right to education is relatively more consistent, reinforcing the importance of institutional capacity and monitoring in reducing disparities in welfare scheme implementation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Early Childhood Care and ICDS Education under the RPFP Framework

Early childhood care and education form a critical component of the

right to education and child development, implicitly protected under Article 21A and supported through Directive Principles such as Article 45 of the Constitution of India. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), particularly through its Anganwadi services, plays a pivotal role in providing pre-school education and developmental support to children.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognition of children's developmental and educational entitlements and non-interference in accessing these services. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSF1–RSF3) show consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 4.07 to 4.93. Panchayats 1 and 4 record higher values such as 4.93, while the lowest observed scores of 4.07

(Panchayats 2, 3, and 7) remain relatively strong. This suggests that there is a broad awareness of early childhood education and developmental entitlements under ICDS, reflecting the scheme's recognition at the grassroots level. However, the slight variation across Panchayats indicates that while awareness is generally high, it may not be uniformly deep or comprehensive. Thus, the Respect dimension is substantially realized, though with minor variations in awareness levels.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires ensuring that beneficiaries are not hindered by procedural inefficiencies or irregularities in service delivery. The process-related indicators (PSF1–PSF3) display

considerable variation across Panchayats, with mean scores ranging from 3.40 to 5.00, though with certain anomalies such as a high value of 7.27 (Panchayat 2, PSF1) indicating possible data concentration or reporting variation. While Panchayats 4 and 5 report relatively high procedural efficiency (5.00 in PSF1), lower values such as 3.40 (Panchayat 7, PSF3) and 3.87 (Panchayat 7, PSF2) suggest inconsistencies in administrative functioning. These variations point to issues such as irregular functioning of Anganwadi centres, inconsistent service delivery, and administrative constraints. Therefore, the Protect dimension is moderately realized, with procedural safeguards present but not uniformly effective across Panchayats.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure adequate infrastructure, learning materials, and supportive services for early childhood education. The facility-related indicators (FSF1–FSF4) show moderate mean scores with inter-Panchayat variation, generally ranging from 2.13 to 4.67, although an outlier value of 7.53 (Panchayat 1, FSF4) suggests possible aggregation or scaling differences. Most Panchayats report values between 3.27 and 4.67, indicating moderate availability of infrastructure and facilities. However, lower scores such as 2.13 (Panchayat 7, FSF2) and 2.87 (Panchayat 7, FSF3) highlight deficiencies in certain locations. These findings indicate that while Anganwadi centres are operational, the quality and consistency of infrastructure, teaching-learning materials, and support services are uneven across Panchayats. Thus, the Fulfil dimension is partially realized, with gaps in ensuring uniform and adequate service provision.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it

shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and community engagement in early childhood education. The perception-related indicators (PRSF1–PRSF2) show moderate variation across Panchayats, with mean scores ranging from 2.93 to 4.53. Higher values such as 4.53 (Panchayat 3, PRSF2) and 4.13 (Panchayat 3, PRSF1) indicate relatively better satisfaction levels, whereas lower scores such as 2.93 (Panchayat 5, PRSF1) and 3.07 (Panchayat 5, PRSF2) reflect comparatively weaker perceptions. This variation suggests that although beneficiaries recognize the importance of ICDS services, their engagement and satisfaction are influenced by inconsistencies in service delivery and infrastructure. The moderate nature of these scores indicates that community participation and awareness initiatives are present but not sufficiently strong or uniform. Therefore, the Promote dimension is moderately realized, with scope for strengthening participatory engagement and awareness-building efforts.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and

accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Overall, the analysis of ICDS (Education Component) under the RPFP framework reveals that while awareness of early childhood education entitlements is relatively strong, the effective realization of these rights is constrained by procedural inefficiencies and uneven infrastructural support. The Respect dimension is substantially achieved, while the Protect and Promote dimensions are moderately realized with noticeable variation. The Fulfil dimension remains partial, reflecting gaps in infrastructure and service consistency. These findings underscore that the realization of early childhood education rights is significantly influenced by Panchayat-level administrative capacity and monitoring, reinforcing the importance of strengthening grassroots governance mechanisms to ensure equitable and effective implementation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level

institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Rural Health Entitlements and NRHM under the RPFP Framework

The right to health is an essential component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and is further reinforced through Directive Principles such as Articles 39(e), 41, and 47. The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) represents a key policy intervention aimed at improving access to affordable and quality healthcare services in rural areas.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme

performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognition of health-related entitlements and non-interference in accessing healthcare services. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSG1–RSG3) show consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 3.80 to 5.00. Panchayats 1 and 3 report the highest score of 5.00 (RSG1), while even the lowest observed value of 3.80 (Panchayat 3, RSG2) remains relatively strong. Most Panchayats record values above 4.00, reflecting a substantial level of awareness regarding health services and entitlements under NRHM. However, slight variations across Panchayats suggest that while awareness is generally widespread, it may not be uniformly comprehensive. Thus, the Respect dimension is substantially realized, indicating that the right to health is well recognized at the normative level.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally

available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires ensuring that beneficiaries are not hindered by procedural inefficiencies or administrative barriers in accessing healthcare services. The process-related indicators (PSG1–PSG3) demonstrate moderate to high mean scores ranging from 3.60 to 5.00, with noticeable variation across Panchayats. Panchayats 4 and 5 record the highest scores of 5.00 (PSG1 and PSG2), indicating strong procedural functioning, while comparatively lower values such as 3.60 (Panchayat 1, PSG2) and 3.73 (Panchayat 1, PSG3) suggest certain inefficiencies in service delivery and coordination. This variation reflects inconsistencies in administrative responsiveness, outreach mechanisms, and access to healthcare services. Although procedural systems are largely functional, the presence of moderate scores indicates that barriers still exist in ensuring seamless service delivery. Therefore, the Protect dimension is moderately to substantially realized, but not uniformly across Panchayats.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between

policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure adequate healthcare infrastructure, medical supplies, and support services. The facility-related indicators (FSG1–FSG4) show moderately high mean scores ranging from 2.73 to 4.80, with visible inter-Panchayat variation. Panchayats 4 and 6 record relatively higher values such as 4.80 (FSG1 and FSG2), indicating better availability of health facilities, whereas lower scores such as 2.73 (Panchayat 3, FSG4) and 3.13 (Panchayat 7, FSG3 and FSG4) highlight deficiencies in certain locations. These findings suggest that while healthcare infrastructure is generally present, its quality, availability, and consistency vary across Panchayats, affecting the overall effectiveness of service delivery. Thus, the Fulfil dimension is substantially but unevenly realized, with gaps in ensuring uniform access to quality healthcare services.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and community engagement in health-related initiatives. The perception-related indicators (PRSG1–PRSG2) show moderate to high mean scores ranging from 3.53 to 4.73. Higher values such as 4.73 (Panchayat 1, PRSG1 and PRSG2) indicate strong satisfaction and perceived effectiveness, whereas lower scores such as 3.53 (Panchayat 3, PRSG2) reflect comparatively weaker perceptions. This variation suggests that while beneficiaries generally acknowledge the presence and importance of NRHM services, their satisfaction levels are influenced by the quality and accessibility of services at the local level. The moderate variation also indicates that community engagement and awareness initiatives are present but not uniformly effective. Therefore, the Promote dimension is moderately realized, with scope for strengthening participatory health governance and awareness-building efforts.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the

evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Overall, the analysis of NRHM under the RPFP framework reveals that the scheme has achieved substantial progress in terms of awareness and availability of healthcare services. The Respect dimension is strongly realized, while the Protect and Fulfil dimensions are moderately to substantially achieved, albeit with noticeable inter-Panchayat variation. The Promote dimension remains moderate, reflecting differences in beneficiary perception and engagement. These findings underscore that while NRHM has significantly contributed to improving rural health outcomes, its effective realization is influenced by local administrative capacity and infrastructural disparities. The results reinforce the argument that Panchayat-level governance plays a critical role in determining the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of health services, thereby shaping the realization of the right to health.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as

indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Realisation of Child Health Rights under the RPFP Framework: Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS – Health)

Child health and nutrition constitute a fundamental component of the right to health, which is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, further supported by Directive Principles such as Articles 39(f) and 47. The health component of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) plays a critical role in ensuring early childhood health, immunization, and nutritional support. The realization of these rights is assessed through the Respect–Protect–Fulfil–Promote (RPFP) framework, based on Panchayat-wise mean scores.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the

rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognition of child health entitlements and non-interference in accessing such services. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSH1–RSH3) record consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 4.47 to 5.00. Panchayats 3, 5, and 6 report the highest score of 5.00 (RSH2 and RSH3), while the lowest observed values such as 4.47 (Panchayats 2, 3, 5, and 7) remain substantially high. This reflects a strong level of awareness regarding child health and nutrition entitlements, indicating that the scheme is well recognized at the grassroots level. The relatively narrow variation across Panchayats suggests that awareness is widespread and relatively uniform. Thus, the Respect dimension is substantially realized, reflecting strong institutional recognition of child health rights.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns

should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires ensuring that beneficiaries are not hindered by procedural inefficiencies or barriers in accessing health services. The process-related indicators (PSH1–PSH3) demonstrate moderate mean scores with inter-Panchayat variation, ranging from 2.67 to 4.67. Higher values such as 4.47 (Panchayats 1 and 4, PSH1) and 4.67 (Panchayat 3, PSH3) indicate relatively smoother procedural functioning, whereas lower scores such as 2.67 (Panchayat 7, PSH1) and 3.07 (Panchayat 5 and 7, PSH2) reflect procedural challenges in service accessibility and coordination. This variation suggests that while administrative systems are in place, their efficiency and consistency differ across Panchayats, affecting timely delivery of child health services. Therefore, the Protect dimension is moderately realized, with scope for improving procedural uniformity and administrative responsiveness.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure adequate health infrastructure, services, and support systems for child health. The facility-related indicators (FSH1–FSH4) show consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 4.33 to 5.00. Panchayats 3 and 6 report the highest scores of 5.00 (FSH3 and FSH4), while even the lowest observed values such as 4.33 (Panchayat 3, FSH1) remain significantly strong. Most Panchayats record values above 4.60, indicating robust availability of healthcare facilities, immunization services, and nutritional support. The relatively low variation across Panchayats suggests that basic child health infrastructure is widely available and standardized. Thus, the Fulfil dimension is substantially

realized, reflecting effective provisioning of child health services under ICDS.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and community engagement in child health initiatives. The perception-related indicators (PRSH1–PRSH2) demonstrate moderate to high mean scores ranging from 3.27 to 4.60, although an outlier value of 7.13 (Panchayat 3, PRSH1) suggests possible scaling or reporting variation. Higher scores such as 4.60 (Panchayat 1, PRSH1 and PRSH2) indicate strong satisfaction and perceived effectiveness, whereas lower values such as 3.27 (Panchayat 6, PRSH2) reflect comparatively weaker perceptions. This variation indicates that while

beneficiaries generally recognize and value child health services, their satisfaction is influenced by procedural consistency and service delivery quality. The moderate variation suggests that community engagement and awareness initiatives are present but not uniformly effective. Therefore, the Promote dimension is moderately to substantially realized, with scope for strengthening participatory engagement and awareness-building efforts.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Overall, the analysis of the ICDS health component under the RPFP framework reveals a relatively strong realization of child health rights, particularly in terms of awareness and infrastructural availability. The Respect and Fulfil dimensions are substantially achieved, reflecting widespread awareness and strong service provision, while the Protect

and Promote dimensions are moderately realized with noticeable inter-Panchayat variation. These findings indicate that although the scheme has been effective in establishing a foundation for child health services, procedural efficiency and uniform community engagement remain areas requiring improvement. The results further emphasize that Panchayat-level administrative capacity and monitoring play a critical role in determining the consistency and effectiveness of child health service delivery.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Safe Drinking Water and Jal Jeevan Mission under the RPFP Framework

The right to safe drinking water is an essential component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and is closely linked

to the realisation of health, dignity, and an adequate standard of living. The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) aims to ensure universal access to safe and adequate drinking water by providing functional household tap connections in rural areas.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognising water as a fundamental entitlement and refraining from interfering with access to drinking water services. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSI1–RSI3) show generally high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 1.60 to 5.00. While indicators RSI1 and RSI2 record consistently high values, with most Panchayats reporting scores between 4.33 and 5.00, the third indicator (RSI3) shows considerable variation, with lower values such as 1.60 (Panchayat 3) and 2.27

(Panchayat 5) alongside higher values like 4.33 (Panchayat 4). This disparity suggests that although awareness of the right to safe drinking water is broadly present, comprehensive understanding of all aspects of water entitlements is uneven across Panchayats. Therefore, the Respect dimension is substantially but not uniformly realized, with gaps in deeper awareness.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires ensuring that beneficiaries are not hindered by procedural inefficiencies or administrative barriers in accessing water services. The process-related indicators (PSI1–PSI3) reveal moderate to low mean scores with significant variation, ranging from 1.47 to 4.40. Lower values such as 1.47 (Panchayat 7, PSI2) and

1.53 (Panchayat 1, PSI1 and PSI2) indicate serious procedural challenges, including delays in connection provision, inadequate grievance redressal, and administrative inefficiencies. Although some Panchayats, such as Panchayat 4, report relatively higher scores (4.40 in PSI1 and 4.20 in PSI3), the overall pattern reflects inconsistency in procedural functioning. This suggests that beneficiaries continue to face barriers in accessing water services despite policy provisions. Consequently, the Protect dimension is weak to moderately realized, indicating significant scope for improving procedural efficiency and administrative accountability.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure the availability,

accessibility, and quality of water infrastructure and services. The facility-related indicators (FSI1–FSI4) show moderate to high mean scores ranging from 1.80 to 4.60, with notable inter-Panchayat variation. Panchayats 4 and 6 report relatively higher values such as 4.60 (FSI1 and FSI3), indicating better infrastructure and service provision, whereas Panchayat 7 records lower scores such as 2.07 (FSI2) and 1.80 (FSI4), reflecting deficiencies in infrastructure and maintenance. Most Panchayats record values between 3.40 and 4.47, suggesting that while basic infrastructure such as water supply systems and tap connections is present, coverage, maintenance, and quality assurance remain inconsistent. Thus, the Fulfil dimension is partially realized, with gaps in ensuring uniform and sustainable access to safe drinking water.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, participation, and community engagement in water governance and management. The perception-related indicators (PRSI1–PRSI2) show moderate mean scores ranging from 2.53 to 4.60. Higher values such as 4.47 (Panchayat 3, PRSI1) and 4.33 (Panchayat 1, PRSI2) indicate relatively better satisfaction with service delivery, whereas lower scores such as 2.53 (Panchayat 5, PRSI1) and 3.07 (Panchayat 7, PRSI1 and PRSI2) reflect dissatisfaction in certain Panchayats. This variation suggests that while beneficiaries recognize the importance of the scheme, their perceptions are shaped by the reliability and quality of water services. The moderate nature of these scores indicates limited community participation and insufficient awareness regarding water governance and maintenance. Therefore, the Promote dimension is moderately realized, with a need for stronger community engagement and awareness-building initiatives.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme

performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Overall, the analysis of the Jal Jeevan Mission under the RPFP framework reveals that while the scheme has achieved substantial recognition of the right to safe drinking water, its effective realization is constrained by procedural inefficiencies and uneven infrastructural outcomes. The Respect dimension is relatively strong, though uneven in depth, while the Protect dimension remains weak due to administrative barriers. The Fulfil dimension is partially realized, reflecting disparities in infrastructure and service quality, and the Promote dimension remains moderate, indicating limited beneficiary engagement. These findings highlight that the realization of the right to safe drinking water is significantly influenced by Panchayat-level governance, with local administrative capacity and infrastructure management playing a decisive role in determining the effectiveness of scheme implementation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally

available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Realisation of the Right to Sanitation under the RPFP Framework: Swachh Bharat Gramin Mission (SBGM)

The right to sanitation is an essential component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and is closely linked to dignity, health, and environmental sustainability. The Swachh Bharat Gramin Mission (SBGM) aims to ensure universal access to sanitation facilities and promote behavioural change towards cleanliness and hygiene in rural areas.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect

The obligation to respect requires recognising sanitation as a fundamental entitlement and refraining from interfering with access to sanitation services. The findings indicate that rights-related indicators (RSJ1–RSJ3) show consistently high mean scores across Panchayats, ranging from 3.60 to 4.93. Panchayat 6 records the highest value of 4.93 (RSJ1), while even the lowest observed score of 3.60 (Panchayat 7, RSJ2) reflects a relatively strong level of awareness. Most Panchayats record values above 4.00, indicating that respondents largely recognise sanitation as an essential right and are aware of the scheme's provisions. However, variations such as 3.20 (Panchayat 3, RSJ2) suggest that the depth of awareness is not entirely uniform across all Panchayats. Thus, the Respect dimension is substantially realised, reflecting strong but slightly uneven awareness of sanitation rights.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it

shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect

The obligation to protect requires ensuring that beneficiaries are not hindered by procedural inefficiencies or administrative barriers in accessing sanitation services. The process-related indicators (PSJ1–PSJ3) show moderate to low mean scores with significant variation, ranging from 1.27 to 4.53. Lower values such as 1.27 (Panchayat 7, PSJ1 and PSJ2) and 1.53 (Panchayat 6, PSJ1 and PSJ2) indicate substantial procedural challenges, including delays in toilet construction, administrative inefficiencies, and gaps in service delivery. Although some Panchayats report relatively higher scores, such as 4.53 (Panchayat 6, PSJ3), the overall pattern indicates procedural inconsistency. This suggests that despite awareness of sanitation entitlements, beneficiaries continue to face barriers in accessing services. Therefore, the Protect dimension is only moderately realised, highlighting the need for improved administrative efficiency and accountability.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements;

when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil

The obligation to fulfil requires the State to ensure the availability, accessibility, and quality of sanitation infrastructure and services. The facility-related indicators (FSJ1–FSJ4) show moderate to high mean scores ranging from 2.27 to 4.47, with noticeable inter-Panchayat variation. Panchayat 4 records relatively higher values, such as 4.47 (FSJ2 and FSJ3), indicating better infrastructure availability, whereas lower scores, such as 2.27 (Panchayat 7, FSJ3) and 2.40 (Panchayat 5, FSJ4), highlight deficiencies in certain areas. Most Panchayats record values between 3.27 and 4.47, suggesting that while sanitation facilities such as toilets have been constructed, issues of quality, maintenance, and sustained usage remain inconsistent. Thus, the Fulfil dimension is partially realised, with gaps in ensuring uniform and sustainable sanitation outcomes.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level

institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote

The obligation to promote involves enhancing awareness, behavioural change, and community participation in sanitation practices. The perception-related indicators (PRSJ1–PRSJ2) show moderate variation across Panchayats, ranging from 2.13 to 4.40. Higher values, such as 4.40 (Panchayat 1, PRSJ2) and 4.20 (Panchayat 3, PRSJ2), indicate relatively better satisfaction and acceptance, whereas lower scores, such as 2.13 (Panchayat 2, PRSJ1) and 2.73 (Panchayat 5 and 7, PRSJ1), reflect dissatisfaction and limited behavioural adoption. This variation suggests that while sanitation infrastructure may be present, behavioural change and community engagement are not uniformly achieved. The moderate scores indicate that promotional efforts have had partial success but require strengthening to ensure sustained usage and community ownership. Therefore, the Promote dimension is moderately realised, with significant scope for improvement in awareness campaigns and participatory approaches.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Overall, the analysis of SBGM under the RPFP framework reveals that, while awareness of sanitation rights is relatively strong, their effective realisation is constrained by procedural inefficiencies and uneven infrastructural outcomes. The Respect dimension is substantially achieved, while the Protect dimension remains weak due to administrative barriers. The Fulfil dimension is partially realised, reflecting disparities in infrastructure quality and maintenance, and the Promote dimension remains moderate, indicating incomplete behavioural transformation and community engagement. These findings underscore that the realisation of the right to sanitation is heavily influenced by Panchayat-level governance, with local administrative capacity and community participation playing a crucial role in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of sanitation interventions.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics

with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Comparative Synthesis across Schemes and RPFP Dimensions

The foregoing scheme-wise analysis reveals important patterns in the realization of economic and social rights across sectors, highlighting both convergences and divergences in the performance of welfare schemes under the Respect–Protect–Fulfil–Promote (RPFP) framework. A comparative synthesis across schemes namely PDS, Pension, MGNREGA, PMAY, SSA, ICDS (Education & Health), NRHM, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), and Swachh Bharat Gramin Mission (SBGM) provides deeper insights into the structural strengths and systemic limitations of rural welfare governance.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Respect Dimension: Awareness and Recognition of Rights
Across all schemes, the Respect dimension emerges as the strongest and most consistently realized component, with mean scores largely concentrated in the range of 4.50 to 5.00. Schemes such as SSA, PDS, and NRHM demonstrate near-universal awareness, with several Panchayats recording maximum scores of 5.00 across indicators. Similarly, ICDS (both education and health components) and PMAY also show high levels of awareness, typically above 4.40. However, certain schemes such as JJM and SBGM display relatively greater variation, particularly in specific indicators (e.g., RSI3 as low as 1.60 and RSJ2 around 3.20), indicating gaps in deeper understanding of entitlements. Overall, this pattern suggests that state efforts in legal recognition and awareness generation have been largely successful, establishing a strong normative foundation for rights realization.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics

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In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Protect Dimension: Procedural Safeguards and Administrative Efficiency

In contrast, the Protect dimension emerges as the weakest and most inconsistent component across schemes. Schemes such as PDS, SBGM, and JJM show particularly low scores in procedural indicators, with values frequently falling between 1.27 and 2.50, reflecting significant administrative bottlenecks, delays, and barriers in accessing benefits. Even in relatively better-performing schemes like NRHM and PMAY, procedural scores vary widely, typically ranging from 3.00 to 5.00, indicating uneven administrative efficiency across Panchayats. MGNREGA also demonstrates notable disparities, with some Panchayats reporting high procedural efficiency (around 4.90) and others much lower values (around 1.20–1.40). This pattern highlights that the existence of rights does not guarantee their accessibility, and procedural weaknesses remain a critical constraint in the realization of welfare entitlements.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns

should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Fulfil Dimension: Infrastructure and Service Delivery

The Fulfil dimension presents a mixed but moderately strong performance across schemes, with mean scores generally ranging between 3.00 and 4.80. Schemes such as SSA, NRHM, and ICDS (Health) exhibit relatively high and consistent infrastructure scores (often above 4.50), indicating better institutional support and standardized service delivery mechanisms. In contrast, schemes like JJM and SBGM display greater variability, with lower scores in certain Panchayats (e.g., FSI2 at 2.07, FSJ3 at 2.27), pointing to gaps in infrastructure quality, maintenance, and coverage. Similarly, PDS and MGNREGA show moderate scores with inter-Panchayat disparities. This suggests that while physical infrastructure has been broadly established, its quality, reliability, and uniformity remain uneven, particularly in schemes requiring decentralized implementation and maintenance.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Promote Dimension: Perception, Participation, and Community Engagement

The Promote dimension demonstrates moderate realization across most schemes, with mean scores typically ranging from 3.00 to 4.50. Schemes such as SSA and NRHM record relatively higher perception scores (often above 4.20), indicating better satisfaction and community acceptance. In contrast, schemes like SBGM and JJM show lower values in certain Panchayats (e.g., PRSJ1 at 2.13, PRSI1 at 2.53), reflecting dissatisfaction and limited behavioural change. ICDS and PMAY also show moderate variation, suggesting that beneficiary perception is closely linked to procedural efficiency and service quality. Overall, this dimension highlights that community engagement and

awareness initiatives remain uneven, and behavioural transformation has not been fully achieved across sectors.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Cross-Scheme Patterns and Structural Insights

A comparative synthesis reveals a clear hierarchy in RPFP realization across schemes:

- **Strongest Dimension:** Respect (high awareness and recognition across all schemes)
- **Moderate Dimension:** Fulfil (infrastructure largely present but uneven)
- **Moderate but Variable:** Promote (dependent on service quality and engagement)
- **Weakest Dimension:** Protect (major procedural and

administrative bottlenecks)

Sectorally, education (SSA) and health (NRHM, ICDS Health) perform relatively better across all RPFP dimensions, reflecting stronger institutional frameworks, centralized monitoring, and sustained policy attention. In contrast, schemes related to basic services and entitlements such as PDS, JJM, and SBGM show greater variability and weaker procedural performance, indicating higher dependence on local governance capacity. Employment (MGNREGA) and housing (PMAY) occupy an intermediate position, with strong awareness but uneven implementation outcomes.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Panchayat-Level Governance and Local Implementation Capacity

A consistent finding across all schemes is the significant Panchayat-wise variation in scores, even within the same scheme. For instance,

procedural indicators in PDS range from 1.27 to 4.73, while facility indicators in JJM vary from 2.07 to 4.60. Such disparities underscore that local administrative capacity, accountability mechanisms, and governance practices play adecisive role in shaping outcomes. This strongly supports the central hypothesis of the study that Panchayat-level variation significantly influences the realization of economic and social rights.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The cross-scheme analysis reveals that India’s rural welfare architecture has been successful in establishing a strong normative and policy framework (Respect) but faces challenges in operationalization (Protect and Fulfil) and community-level consolidation (Promote). The persistence of procedural inefficiencies

and infrastructural disparities indicates a gap between policy intent and ground-level realization. Therefore, the realization of economic and social rights is not merely a function of scheme design but is critically dependent on effective decentralised governance, administrative efficiency, and participatory engagement at the Panchayat level.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Challenges in the Realisation of Economic and Social Rights in Rural Local Self-Governance (RLSG)

The analysis of various welfare schemes across Panchayats reveals that despite a strong policy framework and high levels of rights awareness, the realization of economic and social rights remains uneven and constrained by multiple structural challenges. These challenges are

deeply embedded in the functioning of Rural Local Self-Governance (RLSG) institutions and can be broadly understood in terms of economic, administrative, awareness-related, and infrastructural limitations. Each of these challenges interacts with the others, collectively shaping the extent to which rights are translated from legal entitlements into actual outcomes.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Economic Challenges:

One of the fundamental constraints in the effective realization of economic and social rights at the Panchayat level is the limitation of financial resources and their inefficient utilization. Although most welfare schemes are supported by central and state funding, the empirical data demonstrates considerable variation in outcomes across

Panchayats, indicating disparities in financial allocation, disbursement, and management. In schemes such as Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission, lower scores in facility-related indicators (for instance, values falling to nearly 2.07–2.27 in certain Panchayats) suggest that the availability of infrastructure is directly affected by resource constraints or delays in funding. Similarly, in housing and employment schemes like PMAY and MGNREGA, procedural delays often reflect bottlenecks in fund flow and financial approvals. Even in pension schemes, while beneficiaries report relatively high receipt of benefits, the extremely low facilitation scores (as low as 1.07–2.47) indicate inadequate financial provisioning for support services such as outreach, assistance, and grievance handling. This demonstrates that economic challenges are not limited to the quantum of funds but extend to issues of timely disbursement, prioritization, and financial governance at the grassroots level.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Administrative Challenges:

Administrative inefficiency constitutes the most critical barrier to the realization of rights, as reflected in consistently low scores in process-related indicators across multiple schemes. The data clearly indicates that in schemes such as PDS, SBGM, and JJM, procedural scores frequently fall within the range of 1.27 to 2.50, highlighting serious issues such as delays in service delivery, bureaucratic complexity, lack of transparency, and weak grievance redressal mechanisms. Even in relatively better-performing schemes like NRHM and PMAY, procedural indicators show wide variation, suggesting inconsistency in administrative functioning across Panchayats. This inconsistency is further illustrated in MGNREGA, where some Panchayats report high procedural efficiency while others reflect extremely low scores, indicating uneven administrative capacity. Factors such as shortage of trained personnel, overburdened officials, lack of coordination between different levels of government, and weak monitoring and accountability mechanisms contribute significantly to these challenges. As a result, although rights are formally guaranteed, beneficiaries often face practical barriers in accessing them, weakening the Protect dimension of the RPFP framework.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Awareness and Capacity Challenges:

While the data suggests that awareness of rights is generally high, with most schemes recording scores above 4.50 in the Respect dimension, this awareness is often superficial and uneven in depth. Certain schemes, particularly Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission, exhibit variation in awareness indicators, with some scores falling as low as 1.60–3.20, indicating gaps in comprehensive understanding of entitlements. Moreover, awareness among beneficiaries does not necessarily translate into effective utilization of schemes due to limited knowledge of procedures, eligibility criteria, and grievance redressal mechanisms. In addition to beneficiary-level gaps, there are also capacity constraints at the institutional level. Elected representatives and local officials often lack adequate training, technical knowledge, and administrative skills required for effective implementation of complex welfare schemes. The moderate scores observed in the Promote dimension (generally ranging between 3.00 and 4.20) further indicate that community participation, behavioral change, and sustained engagement remain limited. This suggests that awareness initiatives are not sufficiently participatory or continuous, thereby restricting the long-term effectiveness and ownership of welfare programmes at the community level.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Infrastructural Challenges:

Infrastructural limitations represent another major constraint in the realization of economic and social rights, particularly affecting the Fulfil dimension of the RPFP framework. Although many schemes show moderate to high facility-related scores, the presence of significant inter-Panchayat variation indicates uneven distribution and quality of infrastructure. Schemes such as SSA and NRHM demonstrate relatively strong and consistent infrastructure, often with scores above 4.50, reflecting better institutional support and monitoring. However, other schemes such as JJM, SBGM, and ICDS (education component) reveal substantial disparities, with some indicators falling as low as 2.07–2.87. These variations point to issues such as inadequate physical

infrastructure, poor maintenance of assets, lack of essential facilities, and uneven coverage across Panchayats. For instance, water supply systems and sanitation facilities may exist but remain non-functional or poorly maintained, thereby limiting their effectiveness. Similarly, gaps in infrastructure under schemes like PDS and MGNREGA affect the reliability and efficiency of service delivery. These challenges highlight that the mere creation of infrastructure is insufficient; its quality, sustainability, and equitable distribution are equally crucial for effective realization of rights.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The challenges faced by RLSG in implementing economic and social rights are thus multidimensional and interrelated. Economic constraints limit resource availability and sustainability, administrative

inefficiencies create barriers in access and delivery, awareness gaps hinder effective utilization and participation, and infrastructural disparities restrict the quality and reach of services. Together, these challenges explain the broader pattern observed in the study strong performance in the Respect dimension, but comparatively weaker outcomes in the Protect, Fulfil, and Promote dimensions. This indicates that while the normative framework of rights is well established, significant gaps remain in their operationalization at the grassroots level. Ultimately, the findings underscore that the effectiveness of welfare schemes is not determined solely by policy design but is critically dependent on the capacity, efficiency, and accountability of Panchayat-level governance institutions.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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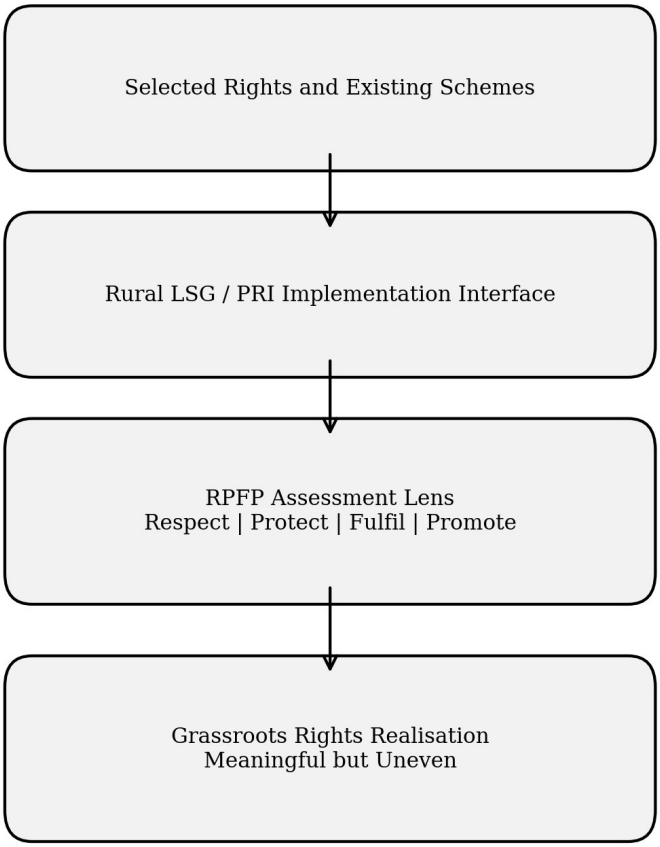
Discussion on Satisfaction of Objectives, Research Questions and Hypotheses

The findings of Chapter V require a broader socio-legal interpretation because the study is not limited to measuring scheme performance. Its central concern is whether rural local self-governance can act as a rights-realizing institution. The following discussion therefore interprets the satisfaction of the research objectives, research questions and hypotheses in light of constitutional decentralization, empirical legal research and the RPFP framework.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

RPFP-Based Logic of Rights Realisation through Rural Local Self-Governance



Scheme availability is assessed against dignity, access, accountability and participation.

Figure 2 RPFP-Based Logic of Rights Realisation through Rural Local Self-Governance

Interpretation of Objective-wise Findings

The first objective, relating to the scope of human rights realization through rural local self-governance, is satisfied by showing that PRIs function as the local institutional bridge between constitutional commitments and everyday access to welfare entitlements. The constitutional vision of decentralization gives Panchayats a governance role in matters closely connected with social and economic rights. However, the empirical findings clarify that constitutional recognition alone does not create automatic realization. Panchayats can facilitate rights, but their effectiveness depends on devolution, capacity, finances, administrative cooperation and beneficiary participation.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The second objective, relating to identification of existing schemes, is satisfied by mapping the principal schemes through which selected rights are operationalized at the rural level. The study demonstrates that economic and social rights are not realized through a single institutional mechanism. They are mediated through different schemes such as MGNREGA, PMAY-G, pension schemes, SSA, ICDS, NRHM, JJM and SBGM, along with PDS as a relevant food security instrument discussed in the thesis. This mapping is important because it converts abstract rights into identifiable governance practices.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards,

and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The third objective, concerning evaluation through Respect, Protect, Fulfil and Promote, is the analytical core of the thesis. The RPFP framework allows the study to move beyond ordinary welfare analysis. A welfare-based approach may ask whether a scheme exists or whether a benefit was distributed. A rights-based RPFP approach asks whether the beneficiary was recognized with dignity, protected from barriers, provided substantive access, and enabled to participate and claim the entitlement. The findings reveal that Respect is comparatively strong, Fulfil is mixed but visible, while Protect and Promote require deeper institutional strengthening.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the

evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The fourth objective, relating to challenges faced by rural local authorities, is satisfied by demonstrating that the limitations of PRIs are structural and not merely individual. Panchayats face limitations relating to funds, training, technical support, autonomy, data management, monitoring and dependence on higher administrative levels. These constraints affect their ability to protect beneficiaries from administrative barriers and to promote rights-conscious participation. Thus, local self-governance is institutionally important, but it remains constrained by an incomplete decentralization process.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The fifth objective, concerning measures for effective realization, is satisfied through the reform-oriented implications emerging from the findings. The study shows that measures must not be limited to increasing scheme coverage. They must address the deeper conditions of rights realization: transparent beneficiary selection, timely service delivery, grievance redressal, social audits, Gram Sabha participation, Panchayat capacity-building, financial autonomy and convergence among departments. Such measures flow logically from the evidence because the major gaps lie in process, accountability and participation.
The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements; when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

Interpretation of Research Questions

The first research question is answered by showing that the scope of rights realization through rural LSG is institutionally broad but practically conditional. Panchayats are constitutionally positioned to mediate access to basic socio-economic entitlements. Yet the empirical findings show that this role is not uniform. The scope of realization is strongest where schemes are visible, procedures are simple, infrastructure is available and local monitoring is active. It weakens where Panchayats lack autonomy, beneficiaries lack support, or service delivery depends excessively on higher administrative agencies.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

In addition, this portion should be read as part of the wider argument that rural local self-governance functions as the practical bridge between policy intention and rights-based outcomes. When Panchayat-level institutions operate with clarity, resources, awareness, and accountability, statutory schemes can become meaningful entitlements;

when these conditions are weak, the same schemes may remain formally available but substantively incomplete. This interpretive layer is especially relevant to the study of RPFP interpretation, scheme performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The second research question is answered through the scheme-wise identification and analysis of welfare programmes linked with selected rights. The thesis shows that rights are realized not through abstract declarations but through concrete programme architecture. However, the existence of MGNREGA, PMAY-G, pension schemes, health, education, water and sanitation programmes does not by itself prove rights realization. Their rights character depends on whether implementation is fair, accessible, timely, participatory and accountable.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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performance, Panchayat-level variation, and rights realization because it shows how institutional capacity shapes the everyday experience of rights.

The third research question, concerning social rights, is answered by a differentiated finding. Education-related implementation appears comparatively stronger and more standardized, while health-related schemes show relative uniformity with localized variations. In contrast, safe drinking water and sanitation reveal stronger Panchayat-wise differences because they depend heavily on infrastructure, maintenance, behavioural change and local monitoring. Thus, social rights are not realized at one uniform level; each right has its own institutional and implementation conditions.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The fourth research question, concerning economic rights, is answered by showing that work, housing and social security are mediated through schemes with different governance logics. MGNREGA and PMAY-G require active local planning, beneficiary identification, technical support, fund flow and monitoring; therefore, they show greater Panchayat-wise variation. Pension schemes, because of more standardized and direct transfer features, show comparatively uniform responses, though facilitation gaps remain. Economic rights therefore depend not only on legal entitlement but also on procedural reliability and administrative responsiveness.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The fifth research question is answered by identifying the barriers that prevent formal entitlements from becoming lived rights. The findings

show that PRIs face challenges of limited financial power, weak technical capacity, dependence on block-level approvals, documentation difficulties, irregular social audits, weak grievance redressal and uneven community participation. These challenges explain why the same scheme may produce different outcomes across Panchayats and why a rights-based assessment must examine both institutional design and actual experience.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Interpretation of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 is accepted with qualification because Chapter V establishes significant perception differences between beneficiaries and elected representatives across selected blocks. The deeper meaning of this result lies in the difference between administrative

evaluation and lived evaluation. Elected representatives may assess implementation by looking at whether schemes are functioning, whether lists exist, whether meetings are held, or whether benefits have been processed. Beneficiaries, on the other hand, judge rights through direct experience: whether the benefit reached them in time, whether they were treated with dignity, whether they faced exclusion, and whether they could obtain remedies when problems arose.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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This perception gap is not a weakness in the research; it is one of its most important findings. Empirical legal research becomes meaningful precisely because it captures how law and policy are experienced by different actors. If only institutional actors are studied, the assessment may overstate implementation. If only beneficiaries are studied,

administrative constraints may be underexplored. By comparing both groups, the study reveals the layered nature of rights realization. The rights-holder perspective is especially important in socio-economic rights because the ultimate test of realization lies in actual access, dignity and benefit, not merely in administrative reporting.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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The finding also strengthens human rights accountability. A rights-based system must be answerable to those whose rights are being realized. Where beneficiaries and representatives perceive realization differently, the gap itself becomes a diagnostic indicator. It signals that local governance requires stronger communication, transparency, grievance redressal, participatory monitoring and beneficiary feedback systems.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Interpretation of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 is accepted with qualification because the evidence shows significant variation among Panchayats in several schemes, while some schemes remain relatively uniform. This qualified finding is important. It avoids the simplistic conclusion that decentralization always produces either success or failure. Instead, the study shows that decentralization produces differentiated outcomes depending on scheme design, leadership, administrative capacity, financial resources, participation and monitoring.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns

should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Variation among Panchayats matters because rights realization must be equitable. If the realization of work, housing, water or sanitation depends excessively on the Panchayat in which a person resides, then the constitutional promise of equal dignity is weakened. Panchayat-level variation therefore reveals the need for local strategies that respond to specific weaknesses. For example, infrastructure-intensive schemes require maintenance and technical support, while process-heavy schemes require transparency, timely approvals and grievance handling.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the

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The evidence also shows that some schemes are less vulnerable to local variation where implementation is standardized, monitored or linked with direct benefit mechanisms. This does not reduce the importance of PRIs. Rather, it shows that Panchayats require a supportive governance architecture. A strong Panchayat-specific rights realization strategy must combine local autonomy with clear standards, accountable monitoring and adequate resources.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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RPFP-Based Discussion

Table 5 RPFP-Based Rights Realization Matrix

RPFP dimension	**Assessment focus**	**Illustrative rights/schemes**	**Thesis-based status**
Respect	Non-discrimination, fair recognition, equal access and dignity in scheme entry	All selected rights and schemes; especially awareness and recognition indicators	Comparatively stronger where beneficiaries know entitlements and schemes are visible.
Protect	Safeguards against exclusion, delay, leakage, elite capture, negligence and weak grievance redressal	MGNREGA, PMAY-G, pensions, JJM, SBGM and other process-dependent schemes	Uneven; affected by procedural barriers, documentation, weak monitoring and limited grievance support.

Fulfil	Actual delivery of work, housing, pension, education, health, water and sanitation benefits	MGNREGA, PMAY-G, pensions/social security, SSA, NRHM, ICDS, JJM and SBGM	Visible but scheme-specific; stronger in some services and weaker in infrastructure-heavy schemes.
Promote	Awareness, Gram Sabha participation, public information, social audit and rights consciousness	All selected rights and schemes, especially participation and perception indicators	Requires strengthening; basic awareness exists but participatory rights consciousness remains uneven.

Respect

The Respect dimension concerns recognition of beneficiaries as rights-holders and not merely recipients of discretionary welfare. In the present study, this dimension is reflected in awareness of entitlements, recognition of eligibility and non-interference with lawful access. The high awareness indicators across several schemes show that many entitlements are visible at the village level. This is a positive sign because without awareness and recognition, rights cannot be claimed. However, Respect also requires non-discrimination, fair beneficiary selection, equal access and dignity. Where local elites influence access, where women or vulnerable groups participate less, or where beneficiaries depend on intermediaries for basic information, Respect remains incomplete despite formal awareness.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Protect

The Protect dimension is the most sensitive indicator of rights realization because it examines whether beneficiaries are shielded from barriers, leakage, delay, exclusion, negligence, elite capture and corruption. Chapter V indicates that process-related indicators are often weaker than awareness indicators. This means that the beneficiary may know about the right but may still encounter obstacles in accessing it. Weak grievance redressal, delayed wage payment, slow housing instalments, documentation problems, lack of effective social audit and limited monitoring reduce the protective function of PRIs. A rights-based Panchayat system must therefore not only distribute benefits but also protect beneficiaries against administrative and social

barriers.

The analytical importance of this material lies in the way it converts the broader legal and institutional question into measurable empirical evidence. The figures, group differences, and Panchayat-wise patterns should therefore be read not merely as numerical outputs but as indicators of how rights are experienced by different actors within the rural governance structure. This added interpretation strengthens the evidentiary value of the chapter because it connects descriptive statistics with the substantive question of whether economic and social rights are actually reaching the intended population.

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Fulfil

The Fulfil dimension concerns actual delivery. It asks whether the institutional system provides work under MGNREGA, housing under PMAY-G, pensions and social security support, health services through NRHM and ICDS health, educational access through SSA and ICDS education, drinking water through JJM, and sanitation through SBGM. The findings indicate that fulfilment is visible in the existence of infrastructure and delivery mechanisms, and in some schemes it is comparatively stronger than procedural protection. However, fulfilment remains uneven where infrastructure is inadequate, maintenance is weak, or technical and financial support is delayed.

Fulfilment therefore requires more than asset creation; it requires reliable, usable and sustained services.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

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Promote

The Promote dimension concerns awareness-building, public information, Gram Sabha participation, community engagement and rights consciousness. It transforms beneficiaries from passive recipients into active participants. The findings show that Promote is present but not sufficiently deep. Basic awareness exists, yet rights literacy, participatory monitoring and community ownership remain limited in many areas. For PRIs to promote rights effectively, Gram Sabha meetings must become meaningful spaces for planning, beneficiary verification, social audit and grievance discussion. Public information, wall displays, community-based monitoring and inclusion

of women and marginalized groups are essential for deepening this dimension.

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The RPFP framework is therefore stronger than ordinary welfare analysis. Ordinary welfare analysis may stop after asking whether a scheme exists or whether some benefit was delivered. RPFP asks whether the delivery respects dignity, protects against barriers, fulfils substantive need and promotes active citizenship. It treats welfare schemes as rights-realizing instruments and evaluates them according to the standards of accountability, participation, equality and substantive access. On this basis, the thesis establishes that rural local self-governance has real rights-realizing potential, but that potential requires stronger institutional empowerment and deeper participatory

accountability.

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Suggestions, Measures and Best Practices for Strengthening the Realisation of Economic and Social Rights in RLSG

The empirical analysis reveals that while awareness of rights (Respect dimension) is relatively strong, significant gaps persist in procedural efficiency (Protect), infrastructural adequacy (Fulfil), and community engagement (Promote). Addressing these gaps requires a combination of institutional reforms, administrative strengthening, financial efficiency, and participatory governance mechanisms. The following suggestions and best practices are derived from both the observed data trends and practical governance realities.

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Strengthening Financial Management and Resource Allocation (Economic Measures)

A key requirement is the timely and efficient flow of funds to Panchayats. Delays in fund disbursement directly affect implementation, particularly in schemes such as housing, employment, and water supply. It is essential to establish real-time financial tracking systems to monitor fund allocation and utilization at the Panchayat level.

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Further, Panchayats should be empowered with greater financial autonomy, enabling them to prioritize local needs and address gaps in infrastructure and service delivery. The introduction of performance-based grants linked to measurable outcomes such as service delivery efficiency or infrastructure maintenance can incentivize better implementation.

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Best practices from better-performing Panchayats indicate that transparent budgeting, digital payment systems, and social audit-based financial monitoring significantly improve both efficiency and accountability in resource utilization.

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Enhancing Administrative Capacity and Accountability (Administrative Measures)

Given that procedural inefficiencies represent the weakest dimension across schemes, there is an urgent need to strengthen administrative capacity at the Panchayat level. This includes regular training and capacity-building programmes for elected representatives and local officials on scheme guidelines, digital governance tools, and grievance redressal mechanisms.

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The establishment of single-window service delivery systems at the Panchayat level can reduce bureaucratic complexity and improve

beneficiary access. Additionally, strengthening accountability mechanisms, such as mandatory timelines for service delivery, grievance redressal portals, and third-party monitoring, can significantly improve procedural efficiency.

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Best practices include the use of e-governance platforms, digitized beneficiary databases, and direct benefit transfer (DBT) systems, which reduce delays, minimize corruption, and enhance transparency.

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Deepening Awareness and Community Participation (Awareness and Promote Measures)

Although awareness levels are relatively high, there is a need to move from basic awareness to meaningful engagement and empowerment. This can be achieved through continuous and participatory awareness campaigns, involving local institutions such as self-help groups, schools, Anganwadi centres, and community leaders.

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Special emphasis should be placed on rights literacy, ensuring that beneficiaries understand not only their entitlements but also the procedures to access them and the mechanisms available for grievance redressal.

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Institutionalizing Gram Sabha-based participatory planning and monitoring can significantly enhance community ownership and accountability. Best practices from effective Panchayats show that active Gram Sabha meetings, community monitoring committees, and inclusion of marginalized groups lead to better implementation outcomes and higher satisfaction levels.

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Improving Infrastructure and Service Delivery Systems (Fulfil Measures)

To address infrastructural disparities, there is a need for

standardization of minimum service delivery norms across Panchayats. This includes ensuring functional infrastructure in key sectors such as water supply, sanitation, healthcare, education, and food distribution.
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Equally important is the maintenance and sustainability of assets, which requires dedicated funding, local monitoring, and community involvement. Panchayats should adopt convergence approaches, integrating multiple schemes (e.g., linking water, sanitation, and health initiatives) to maximize impact and avoid duplication of efforts.
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Best practices include geo-tagging of assets, regular infrastructure audits, and community-based maintenance systems, which help ensure that facilities remain functional and accessible over time.

Strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Use

Effective implementation requires robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the Panchayat level. Data-driven governance should be promoted through the use of real-time dashboards, performance indicators, and periodic evaluation reports.

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The integration of social audits and independent evaluations can enhance transparency and provide feedback for policy improvement. Panchayats should also be encouraged to use local data for planning and decision-making, ensuring that interventions are tailored to specific needs.

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Best practices demonstrate that data transparency and public disclosure of performance indicators improve accountability and citizen trust.

Promoting Decentralised and Inclusive Governance

A critical measure for improving implementation is strengthening decentralised decision-making and ensuring that Panchayats have the authority, capacity, and resources to function effectively. This includes greater devolution of functions, funds, and functionaries in line with constitutional provisions.

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Inclusion of marginalized groups such as women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and economically weaker sections in decision-making processes is essential for equitable realization of rights.

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Best practices include inclusive planning processes, gender-sensitive budgeting, and representation of vulnerable groups in local governance structures, which enhance equity and effectiveness in service delivery.

This discussion is also important from a rights-based perspective because it shows that legal recognition alone does not complete the process of

rights realization. The normative framework creates duties, standards, and institutional expectations, but those commitments must be translated into administrative practice through local authorities and implementation agencies. The expanded reading therefore highlights the bridge between legal entitlement and practical governance, which is central to evaluating the role of rural local self-governance.

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The realization of economic and social rights in rural areas requires a holistic and integrated approach, addressing economic, administrative, awareness, and infrastructural challenges simultaneously. The findings suggest that while the normative framework of rights is well established, its effective implementation depends on strengthening Panchayat-level governance, improving administrative efficiency, ensuring equitable infrastructure, and fostering active community participation.

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Adopting these measures and best practices can significantly bridge the gap between policy intent and ground-level reality, thereby ensuring that economic and social rights are not merely recognized but effectively realized in rural India.

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